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ABSTRACT

Elementary and secondary school teachers and school administrators often say they get their information about educational practice from colleagues and from inservice meetings. Research, however, suggests that teachers seldom talk shop with their colleagues. This leaves professional journals as the clearest channel of communication about educational change and innovation. Getting teachers to read journals, however, can be a problem, given their time constraints. One possible solution involves having colleagues who subscribe to journals and regularly read them select material they think is valuable, copy the selected material, and circulate it to interested parties. To get such a program started requires a needs assessment that takes into account not only teachers' professional interests but also a school system's priorities. Based on this assessment, a short list of general topics can be compiled and a survey form listing them circulated with a list of appropriate journal articles. Attention to detail is necessary to keep such a system going. Matters such as copyright regulations, advertising of the service, recruiting, training and retaining master readers, and gaining feedback from materials already circulated all require carefully thought out responses. There is a payoff, however, for people learn more, are more confident, and communicate more accurately if they have creditable background information. (RBW)

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SHARING THE WORD: READING FOR THOSE WHO HAVEN'T THE TIME

A Presentation for

The 11th Annual Conference of the California Reading Association
"Reading: The Olympian Challenge"
Oakland, California, 3-5 November 1984

by

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Sharing the Word: Reading for Those Who Haven't the Time

Introduction

I'm going to outline a system anyone can establish to provide colleagues with a good current on-going cross-section of professional journal literature to help keep them up to date. The literature is selected on the expressed professional interests of those colleagues and the system is based on your own good will, energy, generosity, and splendid good taste in professional literature.

We'll start by reviewing some of the literature on how professional educators learn about innovation and change and current educational events. Then we'll review the law on "fair use" under current copyright law, for our system is based on copying journal literature. Then we'll examine how one medium-size school district is able to distribute a lot of information on diverse subjects with a minimum of time, effort, and money -- and a maximum of professional benefit (as evaluated by the recipients themselves).

Finally, we'll review a variety of suggestions made by researchers and by my colleagues and by me to encourage the use of periodical journal literature as an effective inservice medium for educational staffs, not only for classroom teachers and principals and counselors and librarians, but also for aides and secretaries and clerks and custodians --not to speak of those folk in the central office.

Let me begin with a couple of quotations that we might refer to as our texts for the hour:

SHARING IS THE HALLMARK OF THE PROFESSIONAL
PROFESSIONAL READING IS THE FOOD OF LEADERSHIP

How Do We Get Our Information about Educational Practice?

As a way to get us all in approximately the same context. let's see how we here usually get the professional information on which we base our practice. PLEASE TAKE THE YELLOW SHEET, GIVE YOURSELF A HUNDRED POINTS TO BEGIN AND DISTRIBUTE THOSE HUNDRED POINTS OVER THESE INPUTS: (How DO you get the professional information on which you base your practice?) How many points can you ascribe to

- journals, periodicals, bulletins
- local inservice
- coursework and textbooks
- other books and media
- informal meetings with colleagues
- conference proceedings
- ERIC and other data bases
- other (including consultants)

WHERE DO WE GET THE INFORMATION ON WHICH WE BASE OUR PRACTICE ?

	Personal	Secondary	Elementary	Admins
Journals, periodicals, bulletins	__	19	10	23
Local inservice	__	24	39	21
Coursework and textbooks	__	5	2	21
Other books and media	__	3	-	-
Informal meetings with colleagues	__	82	49	11
Conference proceedings	__	5	-	17
ERIC and other data bases	__	-	-	6
Other (including consultants)	__	4	-	1

For citations, see Reference section: Secondary (Pearce), Elementary (Hamlin), Administrators (Andolina and Berger)

Now compare your self-ascribed points to the points on the charted information about three large-scale studies of different populations of educators. Berger and Andolina's (4) study was of elementary, secondary, and district administrators. Notice that this group identified journals, local inservice, and coursework/textbooks as the primary sources of information, with conference proceedings not far behind, and informal meetings with colleages a more distant fifth-place. The administrators cited ERIC and other data bases as providing about 6 percent of their information. The administrators did not credit the other media as much of a source.

Compare your points to those of secondary department heads/teachers of most subjects taught in California schools. This population was a random sample that included about 1600 professionals. Notice the extraordinary dominance of "informal meetings with colleagues" as the source of professional information. Local inservice was a very distant second-place, with journals, etc., trailing much farther behind.

Hamlin's (6) study of elementary teachers displays only four categories as useful: informal meetings with colleagues was highest (as it was with the secondary folks), followed closely by local inservice, which was also the case with the secondary group. Journals and bulletins, etc., gathered ten percent of the total.

Most of the people I've surveyed informally in this way do generally validate the research that's been done.

How to explain the differences? Some of my friends have suggested that as administrators are seen as folk who mostly sit around and drink coffee and smoke cigarets during working hours, and, well, maybe they have more time to read the journals. But we here know that the use of time is more often than not a matter of personal choice, and that reading is a matter mainly of priority.

Let's skip ahead for a moment and consider this image: "Two three-year-olds are busily engaged in opposite corners of a sandbox. One has a shovel and bucket; one has a rake and hoe. At no time do they borrow each other's toys. They may inadvertently throw sand in each other's face from time to time, but they seldom interact. Although in close proximity, and having much to offer one another, each works and plays pretty much in isolation."(3)

Does that sound as if you've witnessed it in some other context? Roland Barth describes the phenomenon as "parallel play" and sees teachers pretty much universally engaging in an adult form of parallel play.

Do Teachers Talk about Their Practice?

Teachers say they get most of their information about innovation, change, and practice from their peers --from the teacher next door, from discussion among colleagues in the teachers room. What does research say about that? Several carefully structured studies have focused on our problem. There appears to be no direct relationship between what teachers talk about and what they teach. What do the studies suggest about most teacher talk?

Sometimes teachers talk about teaching strategies. A very small amount of the time is devoted to that, says Lortie in his remarkable study (9). He says that we mostly talk about quiche, diseases and medical conditions, and the latest episode of "Dallas." Sometimes we complain about a supervisor or a student or a parent. But typically, researchers say, we don't much talk to each other about the science and the art of teaching.

There appear to be complex reasons for this, and those reasons seem to be related to energy conservation; that is, after struggling in classrooms for so many hours with phenomena that may include those that have very little to do with teaching and learning, many teachers express temporary weariness with school and schooling, and want fast, fast, fast relief.

Do you recognize the feeling, as I do, of being irritated with the neophyte's sincere and awkward attempt to find out from us "how to do..." during our only coffee break of the morning?

Teachers have expressed feelings to researchers that they often feel deep inside that they need to conserve their strength and not expend it discussing matters over which they feel they have absolutely no immediate control --like nuclear arms issues, international politics, and even educational practice, psychology, and strategy.

We teachers are found not to read the journals much and to very much prefer to talk shop with our colleagues--except we don't actually DO very much talking about educational matters. In my own observation, those teachers and administrators who do not read the journals will nearly always dismiss the journals as invalid, useless, impractical, expensive, boring --and will propose that "discussion among teachers" is the viable alternative to reading in the professional literature.

However, I have seen these same self-confessed non-journal-readers poring over a copy of an article they themselves have requested and then later discussing that article with colleagues. This contradiction is part of my thesis today.

Where May the Best and Most Useful Professional Information Be Found?

We know that personal, useful integration of information begins with input (as they say) that is solo, alone, lonely, thoughtful, inward, pondering. Only after the initial input and subsequent fermentation is conversation with peers really useful.

We are assured that larger districts often have a variety of inservice resources. Our State Department of Education often has available useful information services about research and practice, which districts may or may not make use of. District respondents to surveys often indicate no familiarity with ERIC, for example, even when their districts subscribe to ERIC services (4).

Staff from smaller school districts often say they have less access to information about educational practice and research than do larger districts, on the average. But key personnel sometimes can overcome the disadvantage of small district or school size by keeping abreast for colleagues and sharing with them.

If the glad tidings of helpful practice, innovation, inspiration don't don't really come from the staff lounge, and they don't come from next door, and they don't come from the district office, and they don't often come from that 30-second solution, the TV --well, where can we find a clear, direct channel of communication with news of change and hope? Our professional journals, of course, directly from our own reading and from those few of our colleagues who make the time to do some selecting for us --selecting on the basis of OUR need.

How do we get necessary information on innovation, research, legislation, discoveries out of the journals and to our colleagues quickly, efficiently, completely, in a fashion that they are likely to accept?

Some non-solutions might include the following:

Get each colleague a microcomputer and start a network;

Get each colleague a microfiche reader (if you're already subscribing to a microfiche service.

Get each colleague established as an enthusiastic twig on a phone tree to communicate redhot information.

Get each colleague to devote a specified hour daily to a seminar for faculty on current professional developments.

There's surely a better way. There are certain people in every organization who are alert to the variety of things going on not only in the home enterprise, but also elsewhere. These are the people --and they may be the formally-designated official leaders or the quieter ones from the ranks-- who seem to be aware of new materials, a successful experiment in a classroom down the hall or across town, who's soloing at the symphony concert next week, what's the name of the latest best seller, who's on first, and what are teachers and aides and counselors and principals and coordinators and PTA folks likely to be interested in.

These are often people who subscribe to journals and read them. They are often those who belong to professional organizations and attend the conferences. They seek to know and to communicate. These sharers have been called "The Gatekeepers," and I can't think of better nomenclature, for it is by means of their energy and insight and generosity that change and growth are able to take place. They open the gates of information at the right times and direct that information where it will do the most good.

I call them "Master Readers," and they are essential to the process I'm going to describe, the process I call, "Sharing the Word."

The Law Supports Us

The process of getting information from the journals to the staff involves copying, so I want first to lay to rest any concern you may have that the copying I describe is illegal. It is legal. Here's why.

I commend to you the article on copyright, "Multiple Photocopying in the Educational Institution," by Mawdsley and Permuth (10). Mawdsley and Permuth do raise many questions that are not yet

answered about copying in schools, but they provide us with an excellent base for decision making in this confused arena.

It seems that our entitlement as educators to do any copying of copyrighted material is based on the doctrine of "Fair Use." Exactly what constitutes fair use of print material for educators? Congress, the U.S. Supreme Court, and the Guidelines provide as much of an answer as any one of us needs.

Section 107 of the Guidelines provides the most definitive direction available for educators and the best definition of "fair use." Section 107 provides that reproduction of copies for criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching (including multiple copies for classroom use), scholarship, or research is not an infringement of copyright. The four factors determining fair use in any particular case are

1. the purpose and character of the use;
2. the nature of the copyrighted work;
3. the amount and substantiality to the position used;
4. the effect of the use upon the potential market for, or value of, the copyrighted work.(11)

The classic meaning of "fair use" has had to do with what the composer of a copyrighted work expected the reader to do with the work. Obviously, resale would be inappropriate. Large-scale reproduction would be inappropriate. Would small-scale reproduction? That appears to depend largely on purpose or intent.

Copying needs to be done "at the instance and inspiriation of the individual educator"; that is, the copying needs to be "spontaneous," rather than scheduled. It would likely be termed "scheduled" if the journal's entire contents regularly were copied and the copies given a routine distribution.

Copying needs to be done "briefly:" that is, one does not "briefly" copy an entire book or journal, nor does one "briefly" make hundreds of reproductions of an item. (19)

The system we use of Sharing the Word falls well within "fair use," for in distributing copies of an article from a professional journal to several of our colleagues, our intention is at least fourfold: We want to

1. disseminate the information contained in the article to colleagues we believe will give the information ever-wider play.
2. expect sharing of the information, its source, and its applications and effects;
3. stimulate wider reading of the journal from which the article was extracted;
4. encourage interest and membership in the organization that produced the journal.

If the Supreme Court suddenly reversed itself and required us to

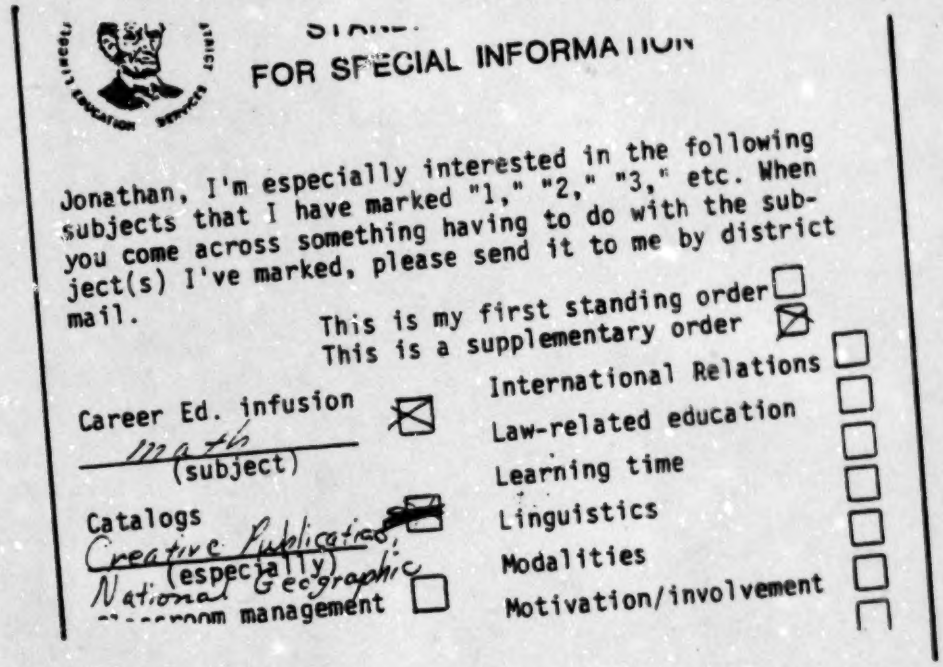
seek permission from the publisher for each occasion or article we can otherwise reproduce under the doctrine of "fair use," we should necessarily drop the activity entirely. But that is not the case, and here is how the system works.

How Do We Do This Sharing?

We begin with a needs assessment, that most basic element of any system. Without assessing the needs of the population you will serve, you are likely to supply information pertaining mostly to your own interests. So the first thing you need is a way to find out what your population needs or would like to have.

Now, because "Sharing the Word" is designed to be an ongoing inservice program of a school or department --of a group, that is-- as well as a way of satisfying idiosyncratic interests of staff, you do want to start your needs assessment by considering the current and recent priorities of your Board of Trustees, your organization's learning goals for students, and your own knowledge of the fads and fashions of education --along with the well-established and ongoing professional interests of colleagues.

So you begin the process by making a list of topics you think address many of the items I just mentioned. You include places for staff to check their major interests. You might consider encouraging respondents to place their interests in priority order (by asking them to number their responses "1," "2," "3," etc.).


FOR SPECIAL INFORMATION
Jonathan, I'm especially interested in the following subjects that I have marked "1," "2," "3," etc. When you come across something having to do with the subject(s) I've marked, please send it to me by district mail.
This is my first standing order
This is a supplementary order
Career Ed. infusion
math
(subject)
Catalogs
Creative Publications
(especially)
National Geographic
classroom management
International Relations
Law-related education
Learning time
Linguistics
Modalities
Motivation/involvement

A couple of things you have to watch out for while you're doing this: If your list is too long, your response rate will diminish. Some of your recipients will figure it's too long to

do "now, so I'll do it later." Later, of course --two or three weeks later-- they may have lost track of the survey form. If your topics are too wordy, you may have been so specific in your description that you lose staff who otherwise would have checked an item. It's important to keep the list fairly short and the topics broad.

Keep in mind that the purpose of the assessment form is to get general interest areas from staff so that those interests may be responded to with copies of appropriate articles selected from the journals of education and from other publications.

In your assessment instrument you need to include spaces for folks to write in their comments and personal requests. This is important for almost any kind of survey, even very short ones in studies whose variables you need to control very carefully: People often like to put their own feelings in their own words. This kind of personalization is also likely to improve the rate of return for your survey.

Make the needs assessment form look both businesslike and friendly. I've found that almost any color paper is better for this purpose than white --except for goldenrod, which is worse than anything for almost any purpose. Mimeograph or Xerox is usually easier reading than ditto. (Nothing like squinting at a pale, purplish ditto and trying to figure out what the originator wanted. Hektograph was better, but you kids wouldn't know about that!) For the "friendly" part, try addressing it to your first-name self; especially if you haven't known the respondent, the form itself will have served as an introduction, and you are now on a first-name basis.

DISTRIBUTING THE FORM

If you publish a weekly or monthly newsletter --any regularly-produced publication with an established readership-- include your needs assessment form as an insert. I much prefer the insert to the more easily produced form which is part of the publication's pages and which one is supposed to tear off on the dotted line.

If the publication is the kind that people like to collect or pass on to someone else, or your form is printed on the reverse of a useful announcement, chances are you'll never see the form from that person. The insert is more trouble initially, but it can be pinned up on a wall or stuck in a book. Its separateness is in your favor. Consider using the insert.

Since your needs assessment is an ongoing affair and is constantly bringing your system up to date, you can leave a stack of assessment forms (I call them "requests") in faculty lounges, waiting rooms, administrative offices--even rest rooms , although faculty wags will make much of that one.

You can also make a point of seeing that certain individuals are sure to get copies of the needs assessment form --by sending them copies and personally inviting them to get theirs. This takes a lot of extra doing, but it works well.

AN ASIDE ABOUT ADDRESSING SURVEYS TO EDUCATORS

We educators, like most other folk, seem to be affected by all manner of phenomena, phases of the moon, environments, modalities, ions, fruit and fibre, and so forth. So, too, we are affected by how we are addressed. I would rather be greeted with, "Hello, Love" than "Hi, Old Timer." And those of you who are about to do some addressing in your professional work might consider this:

A while back I did a mailed follow-up survey of a large population of school principals whom I did not know personally. I had names and addresses. In many cases I had initials without complete given names, and for those and others on the list I did not know whether the persons were female or male --or whether they were still principals. Later I discovered that a couple of dozen were in fact no longer principals. I did not know whether these people were bachelors, mistresses, or doctors.

Now, how do you address envelopes and letters to such persons when you really want them to respond? I tried the following procedure: For the envelope, I addressed every principal as "Initial, Last Name, Principal;" that is, " J. Smith, Principal." For the salutation, I greeted every even-numbered principal on my list as "Dear Principal [Family Name]"; and for every odd-numbered principal, "Dear Doctor [Family Name]."

The returns came in within the usual ten days. Guess which group showed an extraordinarily, significantly higher rate of response? Three times as many "Doctors" returned the questionnaire as "Principals." On the other hand, with only one of the two alternative greetings to respond to, each was probably just reacting as many professionals will when you ask them for assistance. Besides, that aspect of the survey was not a variable to be controlled. But the response rate is something to think about, isn't it.

ORGANIZING THE RETURNED ASSESSMENT FORMS

We can assume that you have had reasonably good success in getting your survey forms back from your populations, perhaps as many as 25 or 30 percent if you're known and respected in the organization and your colleagues really have no doubts about your intentions. Be happy with a return of 15-20% for your first try.

You'll probably find that an additional sixth of the forms will come in from three weeks to eighteen months after the initial survey. Those mostly will be the people who have their form

tacked above their desk and one day notice an article that a neighbor got from you, accompanied by shrieks of delight. Getting something in return is a powerful stimulus for returning a survey.

What about the other 50 to 60 percent of your colleagues? Chances are they haven't paid much attention and maybe they don't read much, and so on --but if you keep after them, you might achieve a conversion. And if these terms sound somehow like those used by a missionary, well, there is a certain similarity, isn't there.

If you are serving a large population --say more than a couple of hundred-- and you have easy access to a microcomputer, you will profit from converting the responses to a computer disk and calling up a cohort on a screen each time you have a copy of an article to send out.

If you have a relatively small group to serve, you can keep track of requests by means of entries on indexed pages in a loose-leaf notebook, or by putting names on index cards in a Rolodex system. You are likely to find, as I did, that it is easy at first to keep in mind the general interests of 20 or 30 people, but that after a while --say two weeks?-- the requests you copied out so diligently become mostly a blur in the memory, and you need reminder.

Of course, if you have 20 or 50 or 150 responding colleagues clamoring for information about "classroom management," you are not likely to send out copies each and every time you or one of your Master Readers comes across something interesting. You are much more likely to be selective not only in what you send, but in whom you send it to.

For communicating between and among schools isn't easy. Sometimes it's like communicating with relatives.

SURVEYING, CLASSIFYING, GROUPING FOR LISTING

The returns of your surveys will include some highly idiosyncratic requests. For example, Susan over at Washington School wants practical lesson tactics not just for "reading improvement," but specifically such tactics tuned to "McCracken Reading." You'll need to devise special notation for such requests (and there are likely to be many such).

You'll need to be able quickly to group such requests under existing topics, in order not to expand your index to the point that it is no longer manageable. Just keep in mind that your system should support not only the idiosyncratic requests, and the requests for support of "ordinary special" projects, but also the system needs to support your organizational goals and

priorities. To that end, we have found it helpful to use a label to be pasted somewhere on the last page of the master copy for a selection to be sent out --a label citing the priority-satisfying nature of the selection.

> THIS SELECTION IS RESPONSIVE TO DISTRICT PRIORITIES. IF YOU DECIDE NOT TO KEEP IT, PLEASE PASS IT ON TO SOMEONE YOU THINK WILL FIND IT USEFUL. THANKS. JP

Incidentally, for the poverty-stricken school or the rich cheap school, donated journals can comprise the heart (or at least a kidney) of the professional library. So it's not only the master readers who can be credited "courtesy of," it's also the donor of journals.

It's important to thank --in writing-- the donor of any journal to your professional library and to assure the donor that the regular donation of each issue ("after you've read it each month") would be deeply appreciated. The sustenance of the whole process is enhanced if you've put a note to yourself in a suspense file to write a thank-you note to your donor at the end of the calendar year, citing the name of the journal and the volume number of the year's issues. Such gifts presumably may be tax deductible.

Journals do tend to proliferate. Ney (12) remarks about the effects of proliferation in recent years. If you subscribe to many for your professional library --and you're fortunate to have a bunch donated to the library on a regular basis-- you may end up with many more than you can find shelf space for.

There's a super-effective way of getting rid of those trunksful of pancakes: Make yourself a label that you can paste to the cover. The label says something like, "This is a back issue of a useful journal. Accept it with my compliments, etc." Of course, you try hard to send these things to people you believe are likely to (at least) feel guilty about chucking the journal into the waste basket.

> TO:
> HERE'S A BACK NUMBER FROM THE PROFESSIONAL LIBRARY. THIS OLDIE-BUT-GOODIE IS YOURS FOR YOUR NEW OR RENEWED ACQUAINTANCE. IF YOU DECIDE NOT TO KEEP IT, PLEASE PASS IT ON TO SOMEONE YOU THINK WILL ENJOY. HAPPY READING, JP

A final observation on that subject: As you're about to paste the label on the journal cover, make sure that cover isn't one of those occasionally stunning photographic things that teachers weep over if you desecrate it. You familiar with that problem?

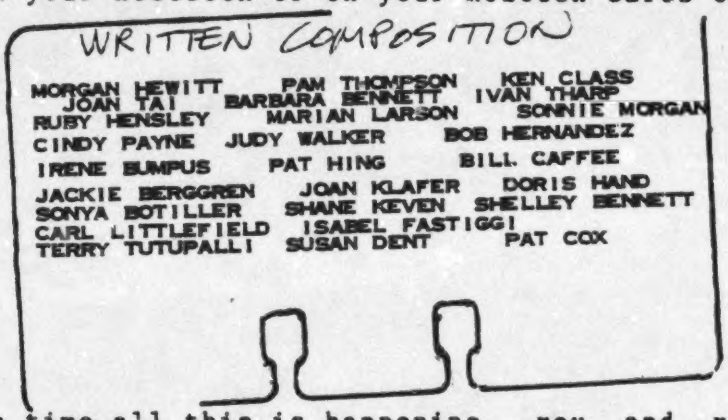
Well, just one more aside: Another way of using back issues so that they don't clog the hallways, attics, and closets of your building is to send a stack to a secondary teacher of fairly-advanced students. Suggest that the teacher might like to assign

the students to make precis of selected articles or report on them or criticize them or imitate them or memorize them, or whatever. This strategy needs to be accomplished with finesse, however, so your colleague doesn't feel that you're unloading your trash. It's probably best to negotiate with the colleague BEFORE you send over the 36 journals in the large box.

Advertise Your Service

Back to our survey: While you're hoping for returns to come in, it's often profitable to do some advertising. Write up a description of your service and have it printed in a variety of your organization's publications. Or write your offer on the teachers room blackboard. And be sure to tell your PTA presidents. And make absolutely certain that your secretaries and aides feel welcome to participate, for this is one more way of letting them know that they're as much a part of the school program as the certificated staff.

Once the returns begin coming in, you'll need to start putting the data in your notebook or on your Rolodex cards or computer disk.



At the same time all this is happening, you and your Master Readers are identifying and classifying useful periodical literature. Who are those people? Well, you are, for one.

You can identify candidates for Master Readership from the comments about staff by principals and other colleagues, from personal conversations, from observations by librarians, and from comments by students.

You are looking for omnivorous readers, for the most part, people who are interested in many things. Such people often carry books and journals about with them, talk about them, and borrow and/or lend them.

We go out of our way to open communications with such people, if we don't already know them. If we're administrative types, we visit their classes if we can. We send articles to them. We demonstrate the value of the high-level professional service that Master Readers can provide. We model the behavior.

Then we ask them to participate, and we do it in writing, in a more or less formal and flowery style. These are the folks who can appreciate a well-meant compliment and who enjoy the style in which it is offered.

Can You Train and Organize Master Readers?

It's not enough to recruit a Master Reader. One must provide "feedback" that can stimulate repetition. And one must find ways of showing that the service provided is appreciated. Certainly the annotation helps when it's added to the message on our stamp, the stamp that's imprinted at the conclusion of every master copy of an article we send out. But that's not personal enough. The Master Readers, whoever they are, need the personal touch, the personal thanks, the reminder that what they're doing is really, truly important.

The title, "Master Reader," is not too grand a title when you consider their value. These people function as inservice mentors and coaches as they select materials, mark contents, and (perhaps) annotate.

But forget about "organizing" them. Real Master Readers will read everything they want, when they want to, marking everything in sight, if they're disposed to do so. (I have found that language arts teachers and librarians are confirmed annotators; others may simply find and forward excellent material.)

However, you can organize the job for them if you wish. You can prepare a reader's kit that includes a list of your file categories, a pad of routing slips, and a list of your Board's or school's priorities. You can also provide some paper clips along with any commentary you think is important. For example, consider including a list of LAST year's priorities, too, for we know how long it takes to get in gear. Consider also listing current fads, events, and anxieties that staff may be interested in reading about.

You're dealing with volunteers and rare treasures, so don't establish deadlines, and don't try to shape them up so that they do what YOU want when YOU want it. Count your blessings.

If you don't come up with any Master Readers, keep trying. In the meanwhile, do it yourself. If you weren't the type, you wouldn't be interested in our conversation.

When you or your Master Reader have identified an article for probable reproduction, make a clear copy of the article. If your reader doesn't want to go to the trouble of making any copy at all, you can ask that the article be identified in the journal by means of paper clips, and the entire journal sent to you to process.

Here Are Some Technical Hints

When you make the master copy, print the identifying bibliographical data on the first page. Include the title of the journal, its volume and number, the month and year, and possibly the inclusive page numbers. Next to the author's name write

"copyrighted" or make a capital "C" in a circle, the accepted copyright signal.

In order to produce copies that are legible and that have as few zits as possible, print your master copies on one side of the page only (but your distribution copies back to back). Use clips to keep the pages together, not staples. If your master copy is not legible, your labors will be in vain, for people won't want to go to the special effort it takes to read illegible copies -- unless you apologize. You can do that, too.

AAARGH. SORRY. THIS PAGE WAS PRINTED ON COLORED PAPER THAT COPIES POORLY. THIS IS THE BEST AVAILABLE COPY.

Now prepare your bibliography/route slip with reference information and page numbers. This is when you decide on file identification terms. If you have a request file handy, you could put the distribution on the route slip at this time, or you could defer that part until later.

Yes, surely these are all clerical acts you can train someone else to do. But keep in mind that finding the right article for the right person at the right time may be the intensely personal act of a mentor, and that distribution may be far more than the simple clerical task it appears to be.

TO MARK OR NOT TO MARK

Annotating an article that will be distributed to a variety of staff may sometimes involve some spychological or political acrobatics. When you distribute an article, you send it to those people for whom the information is important. At least you think so. You may be sending it to people who have expressed specific need for that information, but you will also be sending it along to a number of others who may not have expressed such a burning desire to receive. You will want to present the information with as few barriers to acceptance as possible. I lovingly accept the gratuitous markings of English teachers and librarians; however, I personally do not usually annotate copies for distribution.

Another form of advertising is useful and suitably modest. Show your flag discreetly on a back page. Be sure to credit the Master Reader or donor.

YOUR PROFESSIONAL - USE COPY FROM
LINCOLN EDUCATION SERVICES
COURTESY OF KEN CLASS (LHS)

Sometimes, however, marking is vital, if you do wand to use the

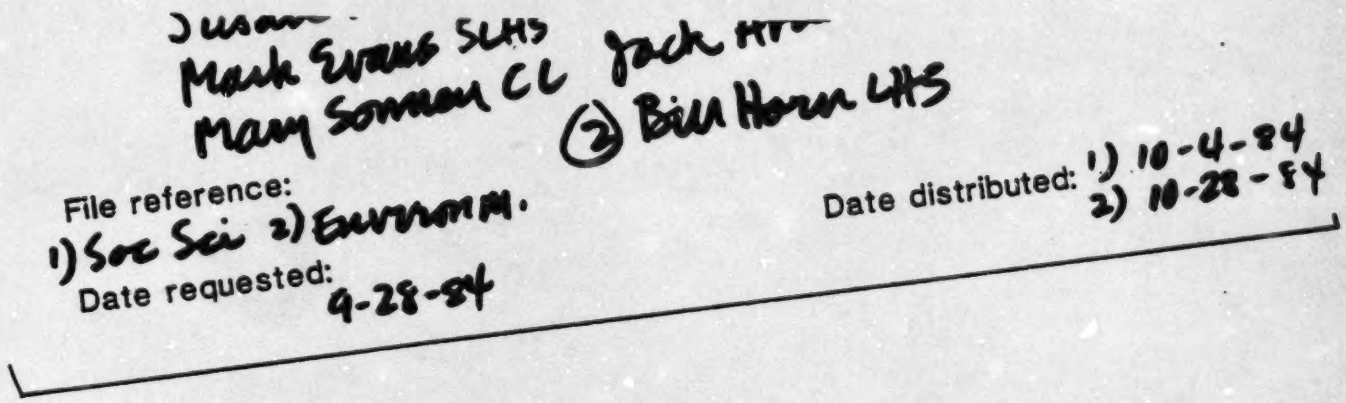
article as a substitute for your own presence, for example. When you're tempted to underline passages or draw eyeballs, arrows, or exclamation points, consider that down the road some folks may wish to use the publication for their own purposes. We can write the names of the recipients in PENCIL, so that they can erase and present the pristine pages (perhaps to students) as their own.

For example, a teacher may wish to share the article with a class and may take an entirely different point of view about what's important instructionally. Perhaps that decision ought to be made BY that teacher, and not pre-empted by our underscoring.

Well, it's a risk, yes. For many folk the modeling influence you provide as a Gatekeeper may be in part manifested by what the recipients see is important to YOU in your annotating behavior. We need to ask ourselves each time, Is my perception of the importance of the argument more important than the various uses to which my colleagues might be able to put this article?

Is Everything Asked For to Be Sent at Once?

It's advisable to establish a priority date for routing. On our routing slip, we have indicated the date of the request (which is the date the routing slip is initiated) and the date distributed (which is the date the material actually went to the distribution indicated). We have found it's also advisable to establish a kind of informal suspense file tuned to the receipt of copies of articles by certain people.



A few colleagues will want information on all kinds of stuff and will prove to be your star users. But they, too, are subject to swamping. That is, you can send them an information overload, and that's no good. Work up some satisfying way that is designed to allow only one or two articles at any time to reach any individual.

Copying isn't cheap, so you'll need to be sure you have set aside some bucks in the budget for the purpose. Hogging the copy machine is a sure way to draw criticism down on your project, so you need to have your work copied at times when others are less

likely to want to use the machine. Avoid making lots of copies of any one thing. Avoid copying lengthy articles; instead, lend the journal.

And of course You will want and need feedback from the consumers.

JONATHAN, I FOUND THE SELECTION YOU RECENTLY SENT TO ME TO BE

- ☐ USEFUL/INTERESTING
- ☐ UNIMPRESSIVE/NOT USEFUL
- ☐ I BELIEVE THE SELECTION YOU SENT WAS IN RESPONSE TO MY STANDING REQUEST FOR PROFESSIONAL INFORMATION/RESEARCH

Organize to Facilitate Retrieval

After you've made copies of a few articles, you realize you need a filing system that enables you to retrieve the masters for reprints. In the first place, the articles that have been selected for circulation have been chosen because they were especially good and useful and important. Fact is that they are likely to be useful again in two months, six months, a year. Put them in manila folders, label the folders to correspond with your needs assessment topics, and put the folders on a shelf for future reference.

Of course you file your foldered article masters alphabetically, filing copies in several folders if that's what your indexing calls for. For example, your Carl Sagan article on nuclear winter is one that teachers are likely to call for again, not only in science, but in social studies and English, as well. So it's helpful to file that one under "nuclear arms," "environment," "science," and --maybe--something else.

I have found that typically one in about fifteen articles circulated will be called for again by a different person. These are people who have seen a copy somewhere and want one for themselves.

Filed copies are also very useful when staff call for "anything you have on 'grouping for instruction,''nuclear winter,'" or another subject of interest. You can go to the file and get three or four articles that will keep the wolf from the door. That's why it's a good idea to make an extra-extra copy each time you copy an article.

I think it's appropriate here to offer a plug for an extraordinary service, the San Mateo Educational Resource Center, with which you can contract to receive research services of various kinds, including "custom packages" or complete computer searches of educational periodical literature and ERIC Educational Documents. As a super-satisfied customer, I can testify to its worth. Again, research findings are most useful to those people who are like you folks here: relatively sophisticated readers, visual learners, energetic, generous-natured.

Something about Fallout

Of course you have experienced the fallout problem. Every magazine and journal contains a tear-out card to enable readers to subscribe, join an organization, provide a gift subscription or membership to a friend, or take advantage of a terrific, one-time deal. I call this stuff "fallout," for it is often NOT firmly fixed in the gutter of the binding, and it often falls out in inconvenient places.

Rule: USE ALL FALLOUT. Tear the cards out (or pick them up), put them in an envelope or box, and later attach them to notes or memos or copies of articles addressed to someone who has expressed an interest, a vestigial interest, a possible interest, or a guilty conscience.

Send along also a form micro-note to the effect that "this is a terrific deal, etc."

> THIS IS A GOOD DEAL. HOPE YOU CAN TAKE ADVANTAGE OF IT. IF YOU CAN'T USE IT THIS MONTH, PLEASE PASS IT ON TO A COLLEAGUE WHO MIGHT BE RECEPTIVE.

You Can Promote Use of the Journals

We are indebted to our Australian colleague Jarvis Finger (6) for some of the following suggestions, and to my colleagues for some of the others. All the suggestions should enable better use of our professional literature:

- *Encourage teachers to try to make time for educational reading
- *Foster establishment of professional libraries in every school
- *Tout the value of the journals with beginning teachers
- *Give away old copies from your professional library to any teacher expressing interest in various subjects appearing in the journals
- *Situate journals in accessible places in the schools and make them easy to check out
- *Recommend establishing staff committees in schools to select periodicals for the schools
- *Scan periodicals and send precis of articles to teachers
- *Copy journal tables of contents and send them to selected staff
- *Periodically copy tables of contents of a particular group of journals and send them to schools for placement in a loose-leaf binder. Attach slips which enable staff to request copies of any listed article.
- *Call for time in each staff meeting to review an article or journal
- *Use bulletin boards to display copies of important articles
- *Positively reinforce staff whom you overhear initiating discussion with colleagues on educational topics in the teachers' room
- *Promote membership of staff in professional subject-matter

organizations (recognizing the high correlation between teacher membership in such organizations and teacher readership of professional periodicals

*Send an interesting article to Bill and a note to Tom that describes the article, recommending that Tom get a copy from Bill, read it, and send it off with a recommendation to Fred

*Write a juicily interesting quotation on your staffroom board and offer to send the full text "to anyone who looks in the folder on the table" (where you have left a few copies and a sign-up sheet)

*Make audio tapes of selected journal articles and advertise the briefly-available tapes (This may represent a whole new arena of copyright law which I'll not get into at this time)

*To your next faculty meeting, take along an article stapled into a manila folder. Choose the subject of the article so that it addresses the potential interests of many likely to be present at the meeting. Inside the left-hand cover of the folder, staple a sign-up sheet stating your offer to send a copy of the article to anyone who signs up for it. Circulate the folder before, during, or after the meeting (depending on your estimate of the odds, the hour, and the temper of the presiding officer

Another way to pack any article with additional portent: You'll recall that we make our master copies on one side only, but our distribution copies back-to-back. For the selection that concludes on the odd-numbered page, fill in the otherwise blank page with the table of contents of the publication. Many is the time we've had staff call up and request another article from the same publication simply because the table of contents was there as the staff member finished reading what we had sent.

Maybe You're Already a Guru

How does one know what is important for educators to know today? You don't have to be a content expert to determine what will help your colleagues become much, much better informed. Of course you don't have time now to initiate this kind of project. We never HAVE time for things, do we. We MAKE a priority for the things we want to do or the things we must do.

People do learn more and are more confident and communicate more accurately if they have creditable background information. You can help them have more of it. You can use slow times. You can use suspense files to tickle your memory.

You can use the volunteer and solicited contributions of those energetic newcomers and dedicated old timers in every organization. You can help bridge the gaps.

You can encourage and stimulate people to subscribe to journals.

You can stimulate people to join professional subject-matter organizations and general educational support organizations. You can encourage people to attend conferences and to report on those conference professional experiences to their stay-at-home colleagues.

Ah. You don't have a fancy office and a big budget and three secretaries and a panting Xerox and all that good stuff? You're by yourself in a broom closet after school and the energy sleuths have limited you to a forty watt bulb. Better to light a candle than curse the darkness, they say.

Believe this: You will change the professional lives of your colleagues if you share just one well-chosen article a week. CAN one manage that?

Sharing the word from research, innovation, practice in other places, getting it out to our colleagues may be an Olympian challenge, but you know that it is desirable and possible. In fact, when you set out to be the sharer, it's fun. You have seen how each of can be sharers on our own Olympian scale.

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"Reading for People Who Haven't the Time"
JONATHAN PEARCE
California Reading Association, 3 November 1984

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